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अद्वैतभाष्यमुपकल्प्य दिशो विजित्य काञ्चीपुरे स्थितिमवाप स शङ्करार्यः॥

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Due to commencement of Veda Patasala activity and constraint in the number of available wrappers November & December issues have been combined. Of course no reduction in number of pages.

Thanks to the magnanimity of the patrons, resources of the TRUST are at a level between Rs. 9 and Rs. 10 lacs. The TRUST's year ends on 31/12/85. With a little effort, total resources can cross Rs. 10 lacs before year-end. We leave it to the munificence of the generous supporters of the TRUST.

Dharma Saastras

H. H. Jagadguru Sri Chandrasekharendra Saraswathi Swamigal of Kanchi Kamakoti Peetam

The sources for Hinduism, which is in fact the Sanaathana Dharma or rather the Vedic religion, are the four Vedas viz., Rig, Yajur, Saama and Atharva and the six Vedaangas viz , Siksha, Vyaakarana, Chandas, Niruktha and Kalpa, the four Upaangas, viz., Meemaamsa, Nyaaya, Puraana and Dharma Saastra, totalling in all fourteen.

These fourteen are called "Dharmasthaanas". They are also called the "Vidyasthaanas" since they broaden the intellect and the mind. The soul is purified by the Dharmas.

There are four other saastras which, without directly being useful for purifying the soul, tend to nurse the mind by protecting the body, pro-

viding intellect, and creating sensations. They function as "Vidyaasthaanas", without being "Dharmasthaanas". Thus, as mere "Vidyaasthaanas", are the Aayur Veda, Dhanur Veda, Gaandharva Veda and Artha saastra.

Of these, you all know that "Aayur Veda" deals with medicine. It is a saastra that deals with the body, the diseases of the body and the remedies for these diseases. It cannot be considered as a saastra relating to soul.

Dhanur Veda, meant for the Kshatrias or the warrior community, deals with armaments and warfare. Here "Dhanus" denotes not merely the bow but all the weapons. Dhanur Veda, teaches what the different weapons are and how to use them. Here again, it is not a saastra intended directly for the purification of the Soul.

Gaandharva Veda deals with five arts, — music, dance, etc. It provides knowledge of arts and refines the senses. As a pastime, this is needed by all. This is the only one of all the four Vidyaasthaanas which if practised as "naadopaasana" with bhakthi (devotion), is related to the soul.

Artha Saastra is one which means "Economics". Principally, it deals with statecraft. The tactics it speaks of are "Saama", "Daana", "Bheda" and "Danda". Of these 'Bheda' meaning 'divide and rule' and "Danda" meaning punishment, though sounding cruel, are indispensable and are recommended only for use by the government. Generally, all these four are necessary more for practical living than for a spiritual life.

In life, sickness is inevitable. Here Aayur Veda is needed. Since a state is by and large surrounded by enemies, "Dhanur Veda" becomes necessary. One cannot be all the time doing work, sleeping or lazing, and here comes the significance of "Gaandharva Veda". The government of a state can be run only if the life of the people could be regulated and here is the importance of "Arthasaastra". Thus all

these are of practical necessity.

The results of the practice of these four Vidyaasthaanas are self-evident. If you are sick and if you take medicine, you get cured. If you use weapons, you are able to attack your enemy. A music or dance performance enlivens your life and gives you a sense of enjoyment. Statecraft practised according to Artha Saastra leads to political developments about which you read daily in the newspapers.

The fourteen "Dharma-sthaanas", meant solely for the soul, are, however, not the ones that produce apparent results. They have what are called the 'unseen effects' — effects that are not evident. Purification of soul is something that cannot be demonstrated to naked eyes. The effects of good and bad deeds, leading one to heaven or hell are something that cannot be seen. They cannot be demonstrated. If one does yagna, and, as a result, the gods pleased with the sacrifices produce rains; only the rains could be seen and not the goods. Of course, some pure souls can see the gods but cannot show them to all. Thus, there is a chance for the rationalists' argument that the rainfall might be a chance happening and need not be connected with the performance of yagna. Be that as it may, it is only the fourteen Dharmasthaanas that are directly related to soul, and the four Vidyaasthaanas are just the stepping stones.

On the basis of the theory that the soul is entrapped in the body and as such the soul can be realised only when the body is intact, Aayur Veda assumes significance as an instrument to protect the body. One can engage oneself in a search for the soul only if the body is healthy, just as a society as such can strive towards realisation of soul only if it is free from the onslaught of enemies. Herein comes Dhanur Veda. In a state, the need for spiritual development calls for an appropriate environment which can be created only by correct statecraft as enunciated by Artha Saastra. By the same token, by relieving man of mental tension, and by deve-

loping an appreciation for fine arts, Gaandharva Veda assumes significance.

By so helping indirectly to realise the soul, these four are called "Upangas" or subsidiaries of Vedas. Except Artha Saastra, the other three have the word 'Veda' added to them — Aayur Veda, Dhanur Veda, and Gaandharva Veda. The four are called the "Upa-Vedas" of each of the four Vedas.

With these eighteen — the fourteen Dharmasthaanas and the four Vidyaasthaanas - the entire gamut of modern science and arts is covered by our ancient Saastras. Just one "Aayur Veda", covers modern Physiology, Zoology, Botany, Medical Science, Chemistry and what-have-you. The world today acknowledges India as the source for modern surgery and the figure 'zero' (the cipher). It is only after the rule of the country by the foreigners that the enthusiasm and support for the pursuit of studies of these 'Vidyas' have disappeared. No wonder then that we are found backward in the field of science.

What we had discovered in ancient times are not known to others. All that is known is only what we have not discovered, with the result that we have fallen behind gradually both in spirituality and science. And that is gun-powder. Just because we could not face the cannons of the invaders we gradually glided down just as in the snake-and-ladder game.

If only, even today, we learn to adopt our ancient Aayur Veda and Silpa Sastra which are extremely apposite to our climate and civilization, we can make it easy to turn back to our ancient and Saastraic mode of life.

It is not suggested that we must eschew all that is modern, but we must learn to be discerning and adopt and benefit by such of those as are conducive to the upliftment of the soul, the good of the universe, and suitable to our genius. The whole universe is one family. Our philosophy is that it is all one world and all are kins. It is not necessary to eschew anything just because

it is foreign. Likewise, it is not necessary to consider a thing as good just because it is ours and ancient. By discrimination, we must learn to eschew the bad and accept the good. But what is happening today is a craze for everything foreign and modern, and tendency to decry everything that is ours and ancient. This is wrong.

What is strange is that the very people, who have seen the limits of what we seek after as modern, are now turning to our way of life. It is very clear that we have to stick to our way of life. But then, it does not mean that we should completely turn our back to modern science. We must absorb such aspects therefrom as are conducive to universal good. We must learn enough of it as to be able to point out the shortcomings therein. Just as Kumarila Bhatta disguised himself as a Buddhist to be able to mingle with them freely and learn all about the fine points of Buddhism such as to be able to ultimately condemn them effectively, we must take to the learning of modern science. It is not as though modern science is devoid of good aspects.

When once we reinforce ourselves completely with discipline and character, based on our ancient traditions, nothing can shake us. We can then learn whatever there is good or bad and be in a position to tell others about the good and bad. But it is essential to develop our conduct on right lines before acquiring knowledge, as otherwise our intellect will tend to apply itself to the bad. Such a development of conduct on right lines is possible only if it were based on our ancient traditions.

It will be all the more easier to learn the auxiliary sciences and other 'Vidyas,' though they are mainly useful for life in the material world, if there is the basic faith in and devotion to God and our ancient traditions. It will in fact assist us in purifying our soul and ensure right from the beginining that the knowledge so acquired stays well-set within our soul. Not only the auxiliary sciences but everything else, including

the injunctions of the Vedas and the commandments of the Saastras, ultimately have to merge in the Infinite. All the endeavours to see, observe, learn, and enjoy are for that one purpose, i.e., to realise the 'over soul'. That goal must not be forgotten, as otherwise all the bother of learning and disciplining will be of no purpose.

The Yagnyavalkya Smrithi Says:

"Granthamabhyasya Medhaavi Gnana Vignana tathparah Palaalamiva dhaanyaarthi sarva saastram parithyajet,"

A farmer carefully and daily tends and cultivates the growth of paddy. He does everything for its healthy growth. Then, what does he do at the time of harvest? He removes the chaff from the grains and gathers only the grains. In the same manner one should go about in all earnestness learning all the Saastras and acquiring knowledge. When once real knowledge dawns, one must discard all the Saastras as though they are the chaff as distinct from the ripe grains.

Just as a farmer, right from the beginning, has his aim fixed on obtaining ultimately the ripe grains, our ultimate aim in life should also be what is called the 'Aatmagnana'—knowledge or rather the realisation of the soul.

These eighteen 'Vidyas' are common to all the doctrines of Hinduism—Advaita, Visishtaadvaita and Dvaita. It is only in the interpretation of the Upanishadic portions of the Vedas that differences among the doctrines arise.

Besides the eighteen 'Vidyas,' there are six other saastras called 'Shad-Darsanas'. They are: Saankhya, Yoga, Nyaya, Vaisesika, Meemaamsa and Vedaanta. And then there are the 'Tantras' and the 'Aagamas'.

To whatever extent one delves into these saastras, one's intellect broadens. The Saastras are like the oceans—So expansive.

It is wrong to divide ourselves into two groups—one,

old-worldish, learning all the saastras and the other the modern sciences. One should also learn all the modern sciences and discover how many aspects of these modern sciences are based on our ancient saastras. Likewise how one wishes the occidentals too learn our saastras ! The ancient and the modern should be complimentary to each other.

It is not enough to merely talk, lecture and fill our libraries with books of our ancient traditions. At least a minimum effort must be made to bring into daily practice the tenets of our ancient saastras. It might appear formidable to do so particularly in the background of all the modern chances in one's way of life. But one must strain a little bit. And it is not all that difficult. There is only one aspect in the modern world that is fundamental and that is the craze for money. It is only in pursuit of this craze that one has degenerated and discarded all our ancient "aacharaas" and 'anushtaanas'.

Our ancient traditions never believed in material progress. The material life was utilised for development of spiritual life and upliftment of Soul. Let us meditate on our ancient traditions, which served as the pathfinder for all the moderns.

Let us now go a little deeper into our 'Dharma Saastras".

It will be recalled that in the beginning we referred to the four 'Upaangas', viz., 'Meemaamsa', 'Nyaya', Purana', and 'Dharma Saastra'.

DHARMA SAASTRAS

It is the nature of man to keep doing something or the other at all times. It is only for a second. In the Gita, the Lord says 'Nature impels man to keep doing something without keeping still even for a second; therefore, he should learn the proper method of doing things and by so doing cleanse his mind, acquire good character and habits and then transcend the habits (Gunas) and become a Gnani and merge with the Brahman'.

What should be done, if we are to strictly follow the tenets of our faith, rid ourselves of sins, and having purified the

soul attain Moksha—the happiness of release from worldly troubles. Our very birth has been due to sin. This should be washed off. We should not sin anew. We should elevate our minds and Gunas so that they do not indulge in sin. This is the purpose of religion. So what are we required to do as per our religion? This is not known to us.

Generally speaking, in our present state, we are familiar with Ramayanam, Bhagavatham and a bit of Puranam. It is known from these as to what type of religious injunctions were practised by the said characters at various times and places. These injunctions do not appear cogently or in a codified way; they find mention here and there. The procedures for practising these injunctions are not also mentioned in the Puranas or Ithihasas. Therefore it is not possible for us to practise these injunctions by merely being made aware of them.

The Puranas and Ithi-haasaas have Bhakthi as their central theme. But can we spend all the 24 hours doing Bhakthi, Puja, meditation and singing God's praise (stotra)? No. We have to do a lot for the family. Personally, we have to eat, bathe etc. Even to devote the balance of time to Puja is also not possible. Boredom sets in. We require other directions in which to perform our good deeds. Where do we learn these from? From the Dharma Sastra only. Of the 14 Disciplines (Vidyas), what comes as the last, after Puranas, is Dharma Saastra.

The characters from the Puranas show us the goal. The way to reach it is to begin with actual practice of prescribed Karma — (Karma-Anushtana). Thus Dharma Saastra tells us what and how we should do in our every day life. What the Vedas have said at various places as to what our duties are have been arranged systematically and elaborated by the Upa-angas.

Household duties, personal jobs, bathing, eating have all to be done in order and as laid down, in the saastras.

The Vedic Dharma has devised its injunctions so that all aspects of human activity may conduce to self-advancement and realisation It involves all aspects of our life with religion — if one sleeps in a particular way it helps the personality; if one dresses in a prescribed way it is good for the soul; if the house plan is as laid down, it would help to perform the various Vedic chores. It does not separate the secular life from the religious life. Secularism is also designed to lead to religion as per the Vedic Dharma. Whatever job is done, it is Mantra-oriented and is part of the exercise for the evolution of self. Just as secularism and religion have been unified in the duties which the individual is required to do for his own salvation, the ingredients for Social welfare as also the well-being of the world, are inbuilt in the Dharma Saastras.

The Bhakthi which we have so far seen as contained in the Puranas, is also present in the Vedas. But along with it are so many karmas or duties. Elaborate directions are prescribed for performing puja (worship), when Bhakthi is translated into action. In addition to puja, Yagnas (ritualistic sacrifices) Shraaddam (death anniversary rites), Tarpanam (homage to ancestors) are all considered indispensable adjuncts to Vedic dharma.

The vedas no doubt contain all these. But they have not been codified or presented in any one place. Nor has each procedure for doing the Karmas, been spelt out in detail.

'Vedo Akhila Dharma Moolam' says Manu,-the Vedas alone are the basis, the root cause or the spring of what are required to be done and how to do it.

The Vedas have so designed it, that the duties which are required to be done for individual salvation also indirectly produce common weal. So what serves this dual purpose is dharma. It is indeed true that the Vedas serve as the root cause of dharma. **'Vedo Akhila Dharma Moolam'.**

But on going through the Vedas, we do not find any

orderly or clear-out list as to what one has to do. Nor are there any detailed procedural instructions. What has come down to us from the infinite Vedas is only a small portion. And even here, the Vedic language is very often obscure, their purport is not wholly clear to us.

From out of such Vedas alone has 'Kalpam', the sixth Vedanga presented an orderly and consolidated list of duties or Karma in the shape of sutras. But these are by their very nature brief. Nor do these present all on a particular aspect in place or in continuity. These also do not offer detailed guidance. Dharma Saastras alone make these understandable at length and beyond doubt.

Dharma Sutras (of Apasthamba, Gautama and others) are, as per the rules of Sutra, brief and pithy. In fact a sutra should be so. On the other hand, the Dharma Saastras which are Smritis (of Manu, Yagnyavalkya, Parasara and others) are in the nature of Slokas.

But the common authority for all these is the Vedas. What should we do and how should we do it are all clearly enunciated by the Vedas and we should follow these injunctions implicitly. The role of the Dharma Saastras is to analyse and explain in great detail the Vedic injunctions which are to some extent codified in the Kalpam. If the Kalpam talks mainly of the area of the sacrificial site, house plan etc., the Dharma Saastra lays down the code of conduct for man covering all aspects of life.

'I wish to do this job. But I do not know where to look for in the Vedas to know if it is right or wrong to do the job. Vedas indeed appear endless **'Anantaa Vai Vedah'**. So I do not know where to look to see how this job should be done. I do not also find anyone who has mastered all the Vedas, what shall I do?' – these are some of the questions.

It is indeed an impossible task to pick out what we need from the vast ocean of the Vedas.

'If I knew that the Vedas had said how this job should be

done, I will certainly comply. In its absence what shall I do?'

Manu replies to these questions. "Alright -- let me tell you. Maharishis who have mastered the Vedas have written what are called 'Smritis'. See what they have to say on the subject". 'Smriti' is Dharma Saastram.

'Vedo Akhila Dharma Moolam: Tadvidaam ca Smritiseele". "Smriti" means an aid to memory. 'Vismriti' means — loss of memory. Vedas have aide memoire in the Smriti. The Maharishis who were perfectly informed about the Vedas have compiled the injunctions (Dharma) and Karmas (procedural details as to how to do them) and have presented them in an orderly manner. These are the Smritis. These are written in a language which is easily understandable. Look at them. What you should do or should not do, how to do it, are all clearly laid down in detail"—so says Manu.

Tadvidaam ca Smritiseele. Kalpam which is the Sixth 'Vedanga' describes how to perform the Vedic injunctions. The Grihya Sutras prescribe domestic rites. The Srauta sutras discuss the big sacrifices such as Asvamedha. The Dharma sutras are concerned with the personal and social duties of the persons according to the Varnas in which they are born and the stage of life in which they find themselves.

From the time a Jiva enters in the mother's womb, on to birth, growth, marriage, running the household and at last to cremation — the Smritis lay down all that has to be done in minute detail. It gives a chart which man should follow daily from the time he wakes up in the morning till the time he goes to sleep at night. There are 16 samskaras in the main dealing with the above aspects.

It is enough to keep the Smritis before us; we would know all about how our Faith would have us do.

Dharma Saastra refers to these Smritis only.

SMRITIS AND THEIR SUPPORTING TEXTS

Manu, Parasara, Yagnyavalkya, Gautama, Haritha,

Yama, Vishnu, Sanka, Likhita, Brihaspathi, Daksha, Angiras, Prachethas, Samvartha, Asanas, Atri, Apasthamba, Satatapa — these 18 Maharishis had grasped the contents of all the Vedas through their supernatural powers and have given us their compilation in the form of Dharma Saastra. These are called Manu Smrithi, Parasara Smrithi, Yagnyavalkya Smrithi etc. after the names of the Rishis who compiled them. It is enough to study them — we can know all the Karmas (Anushtana) and Dharmas.

In addition to the 18 Smrithis, there are 18 supplementary texts called Upa-Smritis*.

It is customary for Srimad Bhagawad Gita also to be regarded as a Smrithi, although its contents are not direct quotations from the Vedas. Since it is an authority in support of our faith, it enjoys the status of a Smrithi.

Since there are many such Smrithis, it is likely that what appears in one may not be found in another. In some cases there might be slight differences also between them. Thus some small doubt still lingers. To remove such doubts there are some texts entitled Dharma Saastra Nibandhanas.

Some Smrithis stop at certain matters; they do not carry the complete instructions. Some do not contain the practice of Sandhya Vandana as though it would be superfluous or redundant to repeat what is a 'must', and has been handed down traditionally from one generation to the other. Some do not contain the instructions for sraaddha, some do not have instructions on 'Soucha' or cleanliness. "Eat thus and breathe thus" — these need not necessarily be in the form of written instructions. That is probably how the authors of Smrithis regarded the omissions.

The 'Nibandhana Granthas' contain all that there is to be said, without leaving out anything on the assumption that it is too familiar to be repeated. When the Smrithis are slightly at variance, these 'Nibandanas' effect the reconciliation or synthesis and unequivocally affirm the requirement.

These Nibandanas have appeared as a result of the labours of great men who had studied all the Smrithis, reconciled the variations and have formulated the conclusions without leaving any room for doubt.

Thus in our land, each region follows a particular Nibandana Grantha. The Maharashtrians follow the Nibandana Grantha written by Kasi Natha Upadhyaya called Dharma Sindhu. The Mitakshara is a commentary on Yagna Valkya Smrithi. This is accepted as an authority in law courts, when doubts on Hindu law arise. This has been recognised by courts of law as having the same status as statutes We in the south follow the book called 'Vaidyanatha Dikshithiyam' written by Vaidyanatha Diksh tar. These are very important for householders. Sanyasis learn what they should do or should not from a text c. lled 'Visweswara Samhita'. In Tamil Nadu, Dharma Saastra is synonymous with 'Vaidyanatha Dikshitiyam'. A little proficiency in language would suffice to read and understand the Dharma Sastra. It is not like the Vedas where even after Adhyayana or getting them by rote, the meaning may not be apparent. The Vaidyanatha Dikshithiyam has been well translated and published in Tamil by competent scholars.

VAIDYANATHA DIKSHITHIYAM

Since it was written by Vaidyanatha Dikshitar, the book is so called. He named his book as 'Smriti Mukthapala Nibandhana Grantha'.

Very little is known about Vaidyanatha Dikshitar who has given us this extremely useful treatise He must have lived some 200 years ago. It is known that he was from 'Kandramanickam' village near Nachiar Koil in Thanjavur Dist. He did not stop merely at writing; he practised the various dharmas. He is also known to have performed many Yagnyas.

It covers all aspects of Dharma: Varna (Jathi) dharma, Ashrama, (Brahmacharya and others) dharma, Asaucham (Cleanliness), Sraddha, Prayaschitta Stridharma (ladies), dayabhagam, dravya suddhi

and other topics. All theses are dealt with copiously. The Saastra also lays down (the claimants to) inherited property and even lays down how and to what extent it should be divided. When the Hindu code Bill was being enacted as law, many pleaded for the inheritance laws to follow the Sastraic injunctions. This matter is called 'daya Bhagam'. In Malabar it is called 'Marumaka —— dayam' —— property going from uncle (mother's side) to nephew.

The word dayada, denoting blood relatives —— is derived from daya. Since the Dikshitiyam was the last of the Nibandhana Granthas it has the advantage of not only covering all aspects earlier dealt with but reexamining them too. Earlier, the Nibandhana made by 'Thozhappa' was prevalent in the south. And since its appearance, the differences between Saivites (Smartas) and Vaishnavites were ignored and both sides have accepted it as the authority.

It is no easy task to make everyone accept the Vedas which are the Srutis, and the explanatory sutras that already existed in the form of Kalpa Sutra, Dharma Sutra Srouta-Grihya Sutras and Smritis, and the many Nibandhana Granthas that later appeared. The reason why Dikshitiyam has occupied the place of an authoritative text (Pramana Grantha) is because Dikshitar has been totally impartial and with a broad outlook has adopted the method mentioned in the Mimamsas for determining the meaning of words and having carefully collected all the earlier Saastras, has boldly reconciled the contradictions. In places where the Smritis were at variance, he has with a liberal heart solved the impasse by saying "let each one adopt the practice prevalent in his region, let this be done as the elders in each family had done it"

LIBERTY VERSUS DISCIPLINE

Here I must say something in general. However deep one may analyse a subject or however much in detail one may attempt elaboration, it would be impossible to cover the myriad situations which a

person would face in his lifetime and provide an answer to each problem. Tenets laid down in script would be irksome to follow like laws in a statute book. True that the rules should make for strict discipline and be binding and our Saastras to contain these in large quantities. But we see in practise that high sounding words such as 'liberty' and 'democracy', in actual practice, result in action as one pleases, or the strong (majority) causing hardship to the weak (minority). Therefore the inevitable restrictions imposed by rule making should be tempered by placing a limit on such restrictions.

In other words, there must be a limit to the limitations, otherwise true to human nature, severe restrictions would lead to revolt. Too much discipline would only result in rule breaking.

That is why although our Saastras have provided guidelines on all matters, they have not assumed the compelling force of 'Law'. It has been left to the individual to exercise his free will, following the example of elders and voluntarily following suit. A little choice or liberty should be left in personal conduct based on personal example of elders, tradition, local custom family customs, etc., so that in other matters a person may be expected to follow a strict written code of discipline. The best way to make others follow these tenets is by setting a personal example. The next best way is verbal instruction in the nature of persuasion without any compulsion. The last resort is to make laws and surface compliance.

Sahasram Vada Ekam Ma Likha is an old adage. It means you may use a 1000 words to convince a person but do not commit even one to writing and compel compliance. The order of the day now is to enact (written) laws on each and every subject. And any opinion finds ready publication.

Although the Dharma Saastras are criticised for laying down injunctions by the thousand without allowing any freedom to the individual, in

actual fact it has left many things unsaid in the interests of this very freedom or liberty. It has been the considered view of the authors of Dharma-Saastras that if an individual is not to be allowed to ruin himself and society, there must be elaborate guide lines and rigid control. But if all these are written down in the form of 'Law' the public would feel highly shackled. Therefore it is that only part of the injunctions has been committed to writing; the rest having been left to be followed on the basis of the regional or family custom and traditions.

The feeling of restraint created by Sastraic injunction is not left when the same thing is in the nature of the practice followed by great men, tradition, precept etc. Regional and family traditions are gladly accepted as they evoke a certain sense of personal loyalty.

It is not as though the last of the texts on Dharma Saastra viz. Vaidyanatha Dikshitiyan alone had accepted this large hearted attitude. All the earlier texts held similar views. In the Apasthamba Sutra which is accepted by the majority as the authority, Maharishi Apasthamba says at the end "I have not covered all dharmas in this Saastra. Many more are left. There are many which can be learnt from ladies and those belonging to the fourth caste. You may learn these from them".

This will show how wrong is the charge that the ladies were kept down by men or that the Brahmins had assigned an inferior position to non-brahmins In the great book which is an authority on Dharma Saastra, due cognisance has been given to the wisdom of ladies and non brahmins to the extent of making them authorities on Dharma.

Original Sutrakaras like Aswalayana have said that during marriage celebrations, the decision of the ladies as to when and how the Arathi should be taken (lighted camphor is waved before the bride and groom to dispel evil) and the bride anointed. Although there is a particular mantra for laying the foundation for the marriage pandal, one should

take note of what the workmen have to say on the subject, based on traditlon.

Thus the Sastras do not hamstring a person but have given a fair amount of democratic freedom.

The Dharmasaastras also lay down the ceremonies and rituals which people of the fourth caste are required to do; that caste has not at all been ignored. In the Dikshitiya, these will be found mentioned in detail in the Varnasrama Kanda, Ahnika Kanda and Shraadha Kandas.

Generally, Dharma Saastras are divided into two Kandas – viz. Achara Kanda, and Vyavahara Kanda. Personal conduct is Acharam. Vyavahara deals with law.

CHINHA - DISTINGUISHING MARK

If we belong to a certain faith, then there are certain external symbols or 'chinhas' to indicate it.

The scouts have a distinctive uniform, isn't it? Those belonging to the army, navy etc., have very distinctive marks of identification. In the police too, there are many sub-divisions thereunder. If they were to change their dresses or badges, their performance will not be affected in anyway. Even so there are very definite regulations that they will not do any such thing. The sailor shall not wear the policeman's helmet. Likewise the latter shall not exchange his headgear with the former. There should be discipline and orderliness in each service.

Should not the same discipline and order apply to religion? That is why different marks of identification and different duties have been prescribed for persons belonging to different occupations (Jathi-Varna) and for those in the various Ashrama — way of life. Local custom says wear your saree this way — wear a prescribed mark on your forehead etc.

This was not merely designed as a social discipline. Each one of these has another subtle

aspect to commend itself, viz., purifying the person and helping him onwards, in the spiritual pursuit.

In the offices, the peon is required to wear uniform, not the officers. We don't question why but when the Saastras prescribe various distinguishing features for each occupation and stage in life, we protest at the futility of it in the name of equality and freedom. Our social order based on the immemorial existence of Varnas, with ordained duties, has, in the interest of universal well-being, prescribed different types of personal conduct (Acharam) and observances (Anushtanam) solely to suit their way of life.

This has been lost sight of and a non-existent gradation high and low (caste) has been predicated which has resulted in recriminination and revolt. Ultimately, today we have reached a position where no one has any religious mark of classification.

We are prepared to sport other social symbols unabashedly. But we feel abashed at the religious symbols which are designed to do good to the soul. we call it all superstition. We abandon it in the name of reform; but in order to indicate that we are reformists we wear a special cap! Or we wear shirts and towels on the torso of a particular colour. We attach more importance to these than even to God.

SMRITIS ARE NOT THE PRODUCT OF INDEPENDENT FREE WILL

Even those who regard the Smritis which are the Dharma Saastras with a feeling of respect, have a mistaken notion about them. That is, they think that the authors of the Smritis have independently and of their own volition laid down these tenets. The authors of Smritis are dubbed as lawgivers. That is, they are regarded as having laid down the law as per their own will and pleasure, just as a coterie of jurists had assembled and evolved the (Indian) Constitution, which lays down the principles of public administration. The smritis are regarded as voicing views of their own making.

This thought has led to another corollary. When a particular provision in the constitution is found irksome to follow, we resort to amending it suitably to our liking. Likewise, the question is asked, 'why can't we amend the old laws contained in the Dharma Saastras to suit modern conditions?'

"Why not we trim the Saastras according to the present day trends?". The example of Government amending the rules is cited in support.

But what is not known to many including those who have high regard for the Dharma Saastras — is that "THESE SMRITIS DO NOT CONTAIN THE PERSONAL OPINION OF THEIR AUTHORS. THEY HAVE MERELY ABSTRACTED AND COMPILED WHAT IS ALREADY SAID IN THE VEDAS. SINCE THE VEDIC INJUNCTIONS ARE NEVER UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES CHANGEABLE, THERE IS NO QUESTION OF CHANGING THE RULES IN DHARMA SAASTRAS".

If the Smritis were merely the handwork of Rishis, there is no compulsion for us to accept them in toto. We can reject them if we do not like them. We can do without them if they had introduced matters not to be found in the Vedas; if they had thought by their intelligence as to what is good for man and what is not. That way, there are many who had written the way their minds traversed; we can similarly legislate for ourselves.

In actual fact the Smritis closely follow the Vedic dictums and therefore we must regard them as our authority for now and always.

Then the question arises as to the basis or proof of the claim that the Smritis are written solely on the basis of the Vedas.

VEDA ALONE IS THE FOUNDATION OF SMRITIS

The biggest proof is in the verdict of Maha Kavis—great poets. The founders of our faiths—Shankara, Ramanuja and Madhwa—have affirmed that the Dharma Saastras are based on the Vedas.

But then this cannot perhaps be accepted as infallible as they had a certain overriding loyalty to their individual doctrines. They were committed to safeguarding the ancient values. Therefore they would not preach outside the limits of tradition. But the poet has no such inhibitions. He is neither dedicated nor committed to the establishment of any doctrine. He talks of truth as it appears to him without any bias towards a creed.

The most distinguished of all Maha Kavis, Kalidasa, has thus referred to Srutis in his Raghu Vamsa: He says ::**Sruterivartham smritiranva gacchat.**" Sudakshina followed the footsteps of the cow, even as smriti followed the meaning of sruti.

Here, when describing how Sudakshina followed the footsteps of the cow when Dilipa took the cow to graze, Kalidasa mentions how the Rishis compiled the Smritis. His object was not to tell us what the Rishis did or how the Smritis were made.

It is customary for the subjects of the similie (Upamana) to be superior to the object with which it is compared (Upameya). For example when one's face is compared to the moon or lotus, the moon or lotus will in fact be better to look at than the face. Here the subject of the similie is the very chaste Sudakshina following her husband Dilipa, which implies that the Smritis follow the Srutis still more closely. Therefore the master par excellance of similies resorts to this comparison. No further proof would therefore be required to prove that the Srutis totally follow the Smritis.

Now those observances (Anushtana) which are not clearly spelt out in the Vedas but which are made clear in the Smritis are called Smarta-Karma. Those that are clearly laid down in the Vedas are referred as Srowta-Karma. This should not give room for the conclusion that Smartam is in any way inferior to Srowtam.

The Upasana which is most important for a householder (Grihastha), the Karmas which

are required to be done domestically called Grihya-Karmas, the most important of the Vaidika-Karma Pitru Shraadha, the five yagnyas – are all Smartha Karmas. But out and out Veda mantras are used in their performance. It is therefore clear that the authors of Smritis had understood the spirit of the Srutis in prescribing these obligations. Therefore instead of thinking that Smritis are inferior to Sruti and Puranas are inferior to Smritis, they should all be regarded in an integrated way, as a package deal.

The Puranas narrate the Vedic dharmas in the form of stories. The Vedic dharmas and Karmas are presented not in the form to tables but advice and injunctions by the Smritis. They also indicate the procedure for doing the Karmas.

The Vedas intuitively flashed into the comprehension of the Rishis. Later on the Rishis. recollected what they had seen and they become Smritis. Puranas deal with the truth contained in the Vedas, with the recital of stories. All are authoritative.

Thus the Sruti, Smriti and Puranas all deal with Dharma.

—O—

A man, after fourteen years of hard penance in a solitary forest, obtained at last the power of walking on water. Overjoyed at the acquisition, he went to his Guru and said, "Master, I have acquired the power of walking on water." The Guru rebuked him, saying: "Fie upon you. Is this all the result of your fourteen years' labour? What you have attained is only worth a pice. What you can accomplish after fourteen years' labour, ordinary men can do by paying a pice to the boatman."

– Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa

Vedanta

H. H. Sri Jayendra Saraswathi Swamigal of Kanchi Kamakoti Peetam

Grammar is twofold—that which relates to script, and that which relates to speech. One does not speak as one writes. Even if one were to attempt it, it would not be nice. Generally speaking, script is a form of note to aid memory. In modern times, it provides an opportunity for learning many things, which cannot be learnt otherwise. We can know things through listening to speeches also, and through reading books. But, when we learn through listening to a speech, if there should arise doubts, we can get clarification from the speaker either on the spot or later. On the contrary, when we learn through books, the same may not be possible. We may or may not be able to see the author. The author may or many not be alive. In such circumstances, it may not be possible to get our doubts cleared.

Even after a man dies his writings will survive. His writings may be clear. But some one who reads them may have difficulty in understanding.

When such a situation arises, the reader must go to a person who has knowledge to get his difficulty resolved. Therefore it is that from time immemorial, speech comes first and then script in order that what is spoken may not disappear; and may be preserved in the form of notes. Thus, language is so structured that it will express the thoughts that are in the mind.

Language is that which helps in keeping the body in health, and the soul in reaching the state of goodness. We may speak to our children in our mother-tongue; but they may not understand. So, we should speak to them in the current children's language. It is thus that we can express our thoughts to them. Language is intended to show to man the way of life.

In the world there are many languages. In almost all languages, the mode of speaking is not in accordance with that of writing. The structure of the script follows the spoken language. For example: let us consider two words - *pal* and *bhayam*. Here *p* and *b* are sounded differently. In languages other than Tamil, these two sounds have different letters. But, in Tamil, there is only one, i.e. *p*. So, while writing, instead of *bhayam*, we write *accam* which means 'fear' *(bhayam)*. This is because, if in Tamil we write *payam*, it will not give the meaning '*bhayam*'. Therefore, whenever there are letters which have no corresponding-letter in Tamil, other Tamil words having same meaning are used.

In Indian languages other than Tamil, there are letters corresponding to the sounds that are raised while speaking. Thus, in India, with the one exception referred to, there are letters representing all the sounds uttered. There will be no confusion because letters will follow sounds. In Tamil Nadu there is a script called *grantha*. Even today, some people use the numerals in *grantha* script for indicating numbers. In the *grantha* script, unlike in Tamil, there are all the letters required for representing the various sounds, even as there are in the other languages.

In the old inscriptions we find the Tamil script employed as mixed with the *grantha* script. In these inscriptions, while referring to the names of years, what is done is to indicate the name of the particular year written in *grantha*. For instance when the reference is to Vikramasaka 1,200, the name Vikramasaka will be written in *grantha*, as also the date in *grantha* numerals. Since a long time, for sounds for which there are no Tamil letters, the *grantha* letters have been in use.

Samskrit is not the mother-tongue of any group in all the world. Yet, the Samskrit language is spread all over the world. How is this so? It is through the various languages in vogue that Samskrit has grown everywhere. The Samskrit language is equal to Brahman, the supreme Reality Brahman is all-pervading. There is no particular location for it. This is what is known as omni-presence.

In order to understand that supreme Reality, the divine images are useful. There are images in thousands. Of these, one may choose any and worship the Reality through it and gain the fruit of worship. Just as in the Hindu faith image worship is helpful in order to understand the supersensible, all-pervading Reality, so also the scriptures that are in sanskrit, viz. the Vedas, Puranas, Epics, etc. are useful in giving us intimation of that absolute Reality The Sanskrit language has no script of its own, nor region: it stands pervading all languages and all lands.

From a language or speech if the words of Sanskritic origin are removed, it suffers in beauty and style. While we talk we pronounce with their Sanskrit form. When we write or make notes, we have to have script that is adequate for the purpose. Therefore, the script must be in consonance with the language that we speak.

Some scholars think that the Tamil language is the most ancient, and that all other languges had their origin in it. They give the following reasons for their view : There is in

Tamil only the first letter of each category (*varga*); the other letters are only elaborations thereof. For instance, there are the letters-ka, na, ca, ta, na pa, ma, etc. It is only as elaborations of each that we have the other letters of the same category : e.g. ka, ka, ki, ku, etc In the same way, it is the elaborations of the letter ka, with altered sounds, that we have in words such as *kalpakam*, *ganapati* etc. When we pronounce the word *kalpakam*, it is *ka* that is Tamil that is uttered. But when we utter the word *ganapati*, the sound differs; and in accordance with the difference in sound, the meaning also differs. When, however, the two words are written in Tamil, the same letter *ka* is used : thus *kanapati*. When we utter these words in other languages, the sounds used are *ka* and *ga*, and the letters also are ka and *ga*. The contention of the scholars whose view we are referring to is that these other letters *ga* etc. are only elaborations of *ka*, etc. Therefore, they say, the other letters are elaborations of the letters that are in Tamil. The sound-elaborations have no separate letters or origins. More-over, the Tamil language was the first to appear; it was made to appear by sage Agastya. It was only afterwards that Sanskrit came into being. And, it was only a few centuries ago that Panini gave to this language a grammar. It was from that time that Sanskrit language has been having its growth.

But, according to philology, the science of language, there are differences between the appearance of a language and that of its script. From this science we learn that it is Sanskrit that is the most ancient language, that is the *Brahmi* script that is the oldest of the scripts, and that the various scripts are but variations of the *Brahmi* script. The very expression *Brahmi-lipi* is a Sanskrit expression. Thus we learn that even before the appearance of the *Brahmi* script, the Sanskrit language was in vogue. Furthermore, it is not proper to say that all the other letters are elaborations of *ka*, and all the other sounds are extensions of the sound *ka*. We may say that these sounds are extensions of *ka* if they

e from the same place from which *ka* arises. But, this is not the case. For example, the *ka* in *kamalam* requires a different effort to utter than the *ga* in *ganga* or *ganapati*. The effort thus differs in uttering the sounds or writing the letters. Therefore, *kha, ga* and *gha* cannot be elaborations of *ka*, because the efforts required for uttering them are different from that for *ka*. It was stated that Sanskrit came into being with Panini. That also is not correct. Even before Panini, there were many grammarians. In the *Tolkappiyam*, there is reference to *Aindra-vyakarana*. The *Tolkappiyam* is the grammatical work for Tamil. Since there is reference to *Aindra vyakarana* even in *Tolakappiyom*, the works in Sanskrit must be more ancient. It is held that Agastya is the great one who gave us Tamil, and that because of him Tamil literature has grown. The name *Agastya* itself is Sanskrit. History tells us that Agastya was deeply learned in Sanskrit. In Panini's work there are references to Vedic words as also to letters. We have already stated that the *Vedas* and the *Puranas* have come down from the time when the world appeared. Therefore, from the time of world-creation, Sanskrit has been in existence. It is also the case that it has been growing through the respective languages in vogue in all the different areas.

Thus, the Sanskrit language has been, is, and will ever be protecting the philosophical truths as well as virtues. That language will never perish That is why it has as one of its names 'amara-vani (immortal language). Some people who do not know this, speak of Sanskrit as a dead language. The supreme Reality is manifest as *Omkara*. Thy Reality has neither a beginning nor an end. *Omkara* is a Sanskrit word. Therefore, Sanskrit also has no destruction.

Sanskrit can be studied by all people. All can get to know the philosophical truth taught therein. But since the Vedas should be studied with proper intonation, and some restrictions, it is only a certain class belonging to the Hindu faith that have been studying them Although this is so, the benefits that accrue from Vedic

study belong to all, also, of the performance of Vedic sacrifices. The good that results is for all people, all over the world. It is in this way that we have been enjoying the fruit of Vedic study and of sacrifices.

In the world, each profession is pursued by a distinctive class of people. There is no distinction of higher and lower either in the work done or among those who do the work. Without considering the work to be low or high people used to perform their allotted work with mutual respect and magnanimity, without any competitive spirit and greed; and all undertakings were well done. At the present time, there is widespread confusion; competition is rife; greed and hatred are deep rooted. Yet, somewhere, in some place, there may be classes of people among the Hindus who continue to perform their respective duties, without being swayed by passion, anger and greed. It is because of this that there is at least some contributory factor to the welfare of the world.

For example, a factory can run well only if all that belong to it-from the labour to the proprietor-perform their respective duties well. If, on the contrary, one category of persons do their work properly, and another category do not, the factory would only incur loss. At the same time, the loss may even be offset by the good work done by the category of workers in question. If the proprietor is an intelligent person, able and energetic, intent on the good of the factory, no matter what the conditions are he would help it to progress. Similarly, the people of the world-all of them-should follow good modes of life and habits in order that the world may prosper.

Particularly, those who recite and study the Veda should do their duty, with a sense of responsibility, without greed, with faith, and without any spirit of competition. It they do so, then they would secure what is good both for themselves and for the world. In accordance with the special features of a *yuga*, it is true, circumstances and undertakings take place. But, one should not throw the blame there-on and neglect one's duties.

Thus, a section of the Hindus, the Brahmins, have been entrusted with the duty of studying the Veda and performing the rituals enjoined therein. They are referred to in Tamil as *Parppanar* and *Aryar*. *Parppanar* means one who sees'. What does he see? He sees the truth. Because he studies the texts which lead one to see the truth, he is called *Parppanar*.

The supreme truth, the absolute Reality, can be known through two ways. We can know it through the Vedas and the Upanisads; we can know it also through the Puranas, the Epics, and spiritual preceptors. There are some rules and restrictions in regard to the first. For knowing the truth through the Puranas, the Epics, etc, there are not so many conditions laid down. The study of the Vedas and the Upanisads is difficult. Not so is the study of the other texts. Moreover, in the Vedas and the Upanisads, there are apparently different teachings to be found. To understand them in a harmonious manner is extremely difficult. Many people may even think that there are real contradictions in the ancient texts. When we try to know the truth through the other texts, there may not be such difficulties, because they were composed by great teachers who expounded the truth that is enshrined in the Vedas and the Upanishads after correctly understanding it, since the Vedas were not composed by any persons, their purport is difficult to grasp. Not so in regard to the other texts which are human compositions. The Puranas, etc, are written in such an easy style that even common people can understand their teaching.

Thus, the Brahamin community came to be organised for the purpose of studying the Vedas which are governed by strict rules, so that both they and others could follow what is taught therein, from the rituals to the highest knowledge of truth. The term '*brahma*' means the supreme Reality. The texts that expound it, the Vedas, are referred to as *brahmanas*. The term *arya* is not the name of any parti-

cular class of people, or of any specific language. The meaning of the term *arya* is 'what is worshipful', 'what deserves respect', 'what is pure'.

When we refer to a territory which is pure, we call it 'arya-bhumi.' In some places in our literature, the territory that lies between the Himalayas and the Vindhyas is spoken of as arya-bhumi. The region which is the habitat of deer is also called *arya-bhumi*. Because the land between the Himalayas and the Vindhyas has been designated *arya-bhumi* the people who live there, all of them, should be regarded as *aryas*, as pure. Those who do not know this think that one community alone of the people of the arya land are *aryas*, viz. the *brahmanas*, and that they came south from there. The scholars who do not know the facts believe that the *brahmanas* came from the north, that they are *aryas* wherever they may live, that they are northerners. This is not proper.

From the time the world was manifested in all the parts thereof the Hindus of all communities have lived In course of time, other faiths appeared and the situation changed. At present it is in India that the Hindus live. Since the Hindus of all communities live in all the regions, it is not that they came from somewhere else.

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Deep meditation leads to intuition.

– Yoga Philosophy

The lamp in the hand reveals the things outside. When shall I have the light within for self-revelation?

–Tayumanavar

Mahabharata-XLIX

VIRATA'S DELUSION

C. Rajagopalachari

After defeating Susarma, king of Trigarta, Virata returned to his capital amidst the acclamations of the citizens. When he reached his palace, he saw that Uttara was not there and the womenfolk told him with much elation that Uttara had set out to conquer the Kauravas. They had not a doubt that their handsome prince could conquer the whole world, but the king's heart sank within him at the news, for he knew the impossible task which the delicately nurtured prince had taken on himself with no better following than a eunuch. "My dearly loved son must be dead by now," he cried, overwhelmed with anguish.

He then bade his ministers collect and send as strong a force as could be got together for rescuing Uttara if he was still alive and bring him back. Scouts also were immediately despatched to find out Uttara's whereabouts and fate.

Dharmaputra, now disguised as the sanyasin Kanka, tried to comfort Virata by assuring him that the prince could come to no harm, since Brihannala had gone as his charioteer. "You do not know about her," said he. "I do. Whosoever fights from a chariot driven by her, can be sure of victory Further, the news of Susarma's defeat must have reached there and the Kauravas must have retreated"

Meanwhile courtiers arrived from the field of battle with the glad news that Uttara had defeated the Kaurava forces and recovered the kine. This seemed too good to be true, even to the fond father, but Yudhishthira smilingly reassured him. Said he: "Have no doubts, O king. What the

messengers say must be true. When Brihannala went out as charioteer, success was certain. There is nothing extraordinary in your son's victory. I happen to know that even Indra's charioteer or Krishna's cannot equal Brihannala." This seemed absurd to Virata, but he was too happy to resent it. He made large gifts of precious stones and other wealth to the messengers who brought the good news and ordered public rejoicing. "My success over Susarma is nothing" he proclaimed. "The prince's is the real victory. Let special prayers of thanks-giving be offered at all places of worship. Let all the principal streets be decorated with flags and the citizens go in procession to strains of triumphal music. Make all arrangements to receive, in a befitting manner, my lion-hearted boy."

Virata sent out ministers, soldiers, and maidens to welcome his son, returning in triumph. When the king retired to his private apartments, he asked Sairandhri to bring the dice. He said to Kanka: "I cannot contain my joy. Come, let us play," and sat down to a game with Yudhishthira.

They talked while they played and naturally, the king was full of his son's greatness and prowess. "See the glory of my son, Bhuminjaya. He has put the famed Kaurava warriors to flight".

"Yes," replied Yudhishthira with a smile. "Your son is indeed fortunate for, without the best of good fortune, how could he have secured Brihannala to drive his chariot?"

Virata was angry at this persistent glorification of Brihannala at the expense of Uttara. "Why do you, again and again, bobble about the eunuch?" he cried. "While I am talking about my son's victory, you expatiate on the charioteering skill of the eunuch, as if that were of any significance."

The king's anger only increased when Kanka remonstrated: "I know what I am talking about. Brihannala is no ordinary person. The chariot she drives can never see defeat, and

er is in it, is sure of ess in any undertaking, no mater how difficult."

Now, this perverse flouting could not be borne, and Virata in a passion flung the dice at Yudhishthira's face and followed this up with a blow on Yudhishthira's cheek. Yudhishthira was hurt and blood flowed down his face.

Sairandhri who was near by, wiped the blood with the edge of her garment and squeezed it into a golden cup.

"Why all this fuss? What are you collecting the blood into a cup for?" demanded the angry king, who was still in a passion.

"A Sanyasin's blood may not be split on the ground, O king," replied Sairandhri. "The rains will fail in your land for as many years as there are drops in the blood that is split on the earth. That was why I collected the blood in this cup. I fear you do not know Kanka's greatness."

Meanwhile the gatekeeper announced: "Uttara and Brihannala have arrived. The prince is waiting for an audience with the king." Virata got up excitedly and said: "Ask him in, ask him in." And Yudhishthira whispered to the sentry: "Let Uttara come alone. Brihannala should stay behind".

He did this to prevent a catastrophe, for he knew Arjuna would be unable to control his anger when he saw the injury on his brother's face. He could not bear to see Dharmaputra hurt by anyone except in fair battle.

Uttara entered and paid due homage to his royal father. When he turned to do obeisance to Kanka he was horrified to see his bleeding face, for now he knew that Kanka was the great Yodhishthira.

"O king," he cried, "who was it that caused hurt to this great one?"

Virata looked at his son and said. "Why all this ado about it? I struck him for untimely and envious belittling of you when I was in an ocean of delight at the news of your

glorious victory. Each time I mentioned you, this unlucky brahmana extolled your charioteer, the eunuch, and gave the victory to him. It was too silly really, and I am sorry I struck him, but it is not worth talking about.".

Uttara was overwhelmed with fear. "Alas! You have done great wrong. Fall at his feet right now, father, and pray for forgiveness or we will be destroyed, root and branch."

Virata, to whom all this was inexplicable, stood with a puzzled frown not knowing what to do, but Uttara was so anxious and importunate that he yielded and bowed to Yudhishthira asking for pardon.

Thereafter, embracing his son and making him sit, Virata said: "My boy, you are truly a hero. I am in a fever of impatience to hear all about it. How did you defeat the Kaurava army ? How did you recover the kine?"

Uttara hung his head down. "I conquered no army," he said, "and rescued no cows. All that was the work of a god prince. He took up our cause, rescued me from destruction, put the Kaurava soldiers to flight and brought the herd back; I did nothing.".

The king could hardly believe his ears. "Where is that god-prince?" he asked. "I must see and thank the hero who rescued my son and beat back my foes. I will give my daughter Uttara, in marriage to him. Go and fetch him in."

"He has disappeared for the time being," replied the prince, "but I think he will come again either today or tomorrow." Uttara spoke thus because Arjuna was indeed a prince of the gods and had also for the time being disappeared as Brihannala.

In Virata's hall of assembly, all the leading citizens had gathered to celebrate the king's victory and the princes Kanka, Valala the cook, Brihannala, Tantripala and Dharmagranthi, who were responsible for the victories, arrived also and entering the hall, to the surprise of everyone, sat among the princes unbid. Some explained

the conduct by saying that, after all, these humbler folk had rendered invaluable service at a critical time and really deserved recognition.

Virata entered the court. On seeing Kanka sanyasin and the cook and the others seated in places reserved for princes and the nobility the king lost his temper and gave loud vent to his displeasure. When they felt they had enough fun, the Pandavas disclosed their identity to the amazement of all present.

Virata was beside himself with joy to think that it was the Pandava princes and Panchali who had been ministering to him all these days in disguise. He embraced Kanka in exuberant gratitude and made a formal surrender of his kingdom and his all to him, of course immediately receiving them back with thanks. Virata also insisted that be should give his daughter in marriage to Arjuna.

But Arjuna said: "No, that would not be proper, for the princess learnt dancing and music from me. I, as her teacher am in the position of father to her." He, however, agreed to accept her for his son Abhimanyu.

Meanwhile, envoys arrived from the wicked and treacherous Duryodhana with a message for Yudhishthira. "O son of Kunti," they said, "Duryodhyna feels very sorry that owing to the hasty action of Dhananjaya, you have to go back to the woods again. He let himself be recognised before the end of the thirteenth year and so, in accordance with your undertaking, you have to dwell in the forest for another twelve years."

Dharmaputra laughed and said: "Messengers, return quickly to Duryodhana and tell him to make further enquiry. The venerable Bhishma and others learned in the stars will no doubt tell him that full thirteen years had been completed before your forces heard again the twang of Dhananjaya's bow and fled in fear."

Taking Counsel

The thirteenth year during which the Pandavas had to remain undiscovered came to an end. No longer obliged to be in disguise, they left Virata's capital as Pandavas and settled openly in Upaplavya, another place in Matsya territory. From there, they sent emissaries to summon their friends and relatives.

From Dwaraka came Balarama and Krishna with Arjuna's wife, Subhadra, and her son, Abhimanyu and accompanied by many Yadava warriors. Loud and long was the blare of trumpet conchs as the Matsya prince and the Pandavas went forth to receive Janardana. Indrasena and many others like him, who had at the beginning of the preceding year left the Pandavas in the forest, rejoined them with their chariots at Upaplavya. The Kasi prince and Saibya ruler arrived with their forces. Drupada, the panchala prince, was there too with three divisions, bringing with him Sikhandin and Draupadi's sons and her brother Dhrishtadyumna. There were many other princes gathered at Upaplavya, well attached to the Pandavas.

Abhimanyu's marriage to princess Uttara was solemnized according to Vedic rites before that illustrious gathering of friendly heroes. The wedding celebrations over, they met in conclave in Virata's hall of assembly. Krishna sat next to Yudhishthira and Virata, while Balarama and Satyaki were seated beside Drupada. As the bustle died down, all eyes were turned on Krishna, who now rose to speak.

"You all know," said Krishna to the hushed assembly, "the story of the great deceit - how Yudhishthira was cheated at the game- board and deprived of his kingdom and exiled with his brothers and Draupadi to the forest. For thirteen years, the sons of Pandu have patiently borne their trouble in redemption of their pledged word. Ponder well and counsel a course which will be in consonance with dharma and contribute to the glory and welfare of both Pandavas and Kauravas. For, Dharmaputra desires nothing that he cannot justly claim. He wishes nothing but good even to the sons of Dhritarashtra who decived him and did him grievous

wrong. In giving your counsel, bear in mind the fraud and meanness of the Kauravas as well as the honourable magnanimity of the Pandavas. Devise a just and honourable settlement. We do not know what Duryodhana has in his mind. I feel we should send an able and upright emissary to him to persuade him to a peaceful settlement by the restoration of half the kingdom to Yudhishthira".

Balarama then rose to address the gathering.

"You have just heard Krishna," he said. "The solution he propounds is wise and just. I endorse it as good for both Duryodhana and Dharmaputra. If Kunti's sons can get back their kingdom by a peaceful settlement, nothing could be better for them, the Kauravas and for all concerned. Only then will there be happiness and peace in the land. Someone has to go to convey to Duryodhana Yudhishthira's wish for a peaceful settlement and bring an answer from him, a man who has the weight and the ability to bring about peace and good understanding.

"The envoy should get the co-operation of Bhishma. Dhritarashtra, Drona and Vidura, Kripa and Aswatthama and even of Karna and Sakuni if possible, and secure support for Kunti's sons. He should be one who, on no account, would give way to anger. Dharmaputra, with full knowledge of consequences, staked his kingdom and lost it, obstinately disregarding the expostulations of friends. Fully aware that he was no match for the adept Sakuni, he yet played against him. He cannot now complain but can only supplicate for his rights. A fit envoy would be one who is not a war-monger but is dead-set, in spite of every difficulty, on achieving a peaceful settlement. Princes, I desire you to approach Duryodhana tactfully and make peace with him. Let us avoid an armed conflict by all the means in our power. Only that which accrues in peace is worth-while. Out of war, nothing but wrong can issue."

Balarama's position was that Yudhishthira knew what he was doing when he gambled away his kingdom and could not now claim it as of right. The fulfilment of the conditions of

exile could only give the Pandavas their personal freedom and not their kingdom, that is to say, they need not serve another term of exile in the forest but it gave them no right to the return of their kingdom. Dharmaputra could only supplicate for the return of what he had lost and not claim it as of right.

Balarama did not relish an armed conflict among scions of the same family and rightly held that war would lead only to disaster.

The poet puts an eternal truth in Balarama's mouth.

Satyaki, the Yadava warrior, who heard Balarama speak thus, could not contain himself. He rose in anger and spoke indignantly:

"Balarama's words do not strike me as in the least degree just. One can, if skilful enough, make out a plausible plea for any case, but not all the skill in the world can convert wrong into right or injustice into justice. I must protest against Balarama's stand which fills me with disgust. Do we not see in one and the same tree. one branch bowed with fruit and another sticking out gaunt and useless? So, of these brothers, Krishna speaks words which breathe the spirit of dharma while Balarama's attitude is unworthy and if you grant-what cannot be doubted that the Kauravas cheated Yudhishthira of his share of the kingdom-why then, allowing them to keep it is as uujust as confirming a thief in the possession of his booty! Any one, who finds fault with Dharmaputra, does so in cowardly fear of Duryodhana, not for any sound reason. O princes, forgive my harsh speech. Not of his own volition but because the Kauravas pressed and invited him to do so, did the inexpert and unwilling Dharmaputra play with a sharper that game so fraught with disaster. Why should he bow and supplcate before Duryodhana, now that he has fulfilled his pledges? Yudhishthira is not a mendicant and need not beg. He has kept his word and so have his brothers — twelve years in exile in the forest and

twelve months thereafter in disguise according to their pledge—and yet, Duryodhana and his associates, most shamelessly and dishonestly, question the performance. I shall defeat these impudent villains in battle and they shall either seek Yudhishthira's pardon or meet their doom. How can a righteous war be wrong in any case? There is no sin in slaying enemies who take up arms and fight. To supplicate before the enemy is to incur disgrace. If Duryodhana desires war, he can have it and we shall be quite ready for it. Let there be no delay and let us get on with the preparations. Duryodhana is not going to part with territory without a war and it would be folly to waste time".

Drupada's heart was gladdened by Satyaki's resolute words. He rose and said: "Satyaki is right and I support him. Soft words will not bring Duryodhana round to reason. Let us continue our preparations for war and let our friends be warned without loss of time to bring up their forces. Send word instanly to Salya, Dhrishtaketu, Jayatsena and Kekaya. We must, of course, send a suitable envoy to Dhritarashtra: the learned brahmana, who conducts the religious ceremonies in my court, can be sent to Hastinapura with confidence. Instruct him well as to what he should say to Duryodhana and how he should convey the message to Bhishma, Dhritarashtra and Dronacharya."

When Drupada concluded, Vasudeva (Krishna, the son of Vasudeva) rose and addressing Drupada, said:

"What you suggest is practicable and also conforms to the kingly code. Baladeva and I are bound to the Kauravas and the Pandavas with equal ties of affection. We came here for princess Uttara's wedding and will return now to our city. Great are you among the princes of the land, alike in age and wisdom, and entitled to advise us all. Dhritarashtra too holds you in high esteem. Drona and Kripa are your boyhood friends. It

is therefore only right that you should instruct the brahmana envoy on his mission of peace. If he fails to persuade Duryodhana out of his error, prepare for the inevitable conflict, my friends, and send word to us".

The conference ended and Krishna left for Dwaraka with is people. The Pandavas and their allies went on with their preparations. Messengers went forth to all the friendly princes who got busy and mobilised their respective armies.

Meanwhile, Duryodhana and his brothers were not idle. They also began preparing for the conflict and sent word to their friends to get their contingents ready for war. News of these prepations on both sides soon spread throughout the land: "The constant rap d journeyings back and forth of princes caused a great stir everywhere. The earth shook beneath the heavy tramp of marching legions," says the poet.

It would appear that even in olden days. military prerarations were made in much the same way as in our times.

Drupada called in his brahmana and said to him: "You know Duryodhana's bent of mind as well as the qualities of the Pandavas. Go to him as the emissary of the Pandavas. The Kauravas deceived the Pandavas with the connivance of their father Dhritarashtra who would not listen to the sage advice of Vidura. show the old, weak king, who is misled by his son, the path of dharma and wisdom. You will find in Vidura a great ally in this task. Your mission may lead to differences of opinion among the elder statesmen such as Bhishma, Drona and Kripa as well as among the war lords and, if this happens, it will be some time before those differences are smoothed out, which will be time gained for the completion of the Pandavas' war preparations. As long as you are in Duryodhana's capital talking of peace, their preparations for war will receive a set-back which is all to the good from the Pandavas' standpoint. If, by a miracle you are able to come back with good terms of peace, so much the better. I do not expect Duryodhana will

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agree to a peaceful settlement. Still, to send one on a peace mission will be advantageous. to us".

In December 1941, the Japanese were carrying on negotiations with the Americans and, immediately on the breakdown of those talks, took them unawares and attacked Pearl Harbour destroying their naval forces there. Drupada's instructions to the brahmana would show that this was no new technique and that, even in the old days, the same method was followed of carrying on negotiations and even sincerely working for peace, but simultaneously preparing, with unremitting vigour, for outbreak of war and carrying on peace talks with the object of creating dissensions in the enemy's ranks. There is nothing new under the sun!

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The sun can give heart and light to the whole world, but he cannot do so when the clouds shut out his rays. Similarly as long as egotism veils the hearts, God cannot shine upon it.

– Swami Vivekananada

We want that education by which character is formed, strength of mind is increased, the intellect is expanded, and by which one can stand on one's own feet.

– Swami Vivekananda

Extracts from lectures on

RAMAYANA - 95

Rt. Hon. V. S. Srinivasa Sastri

Then there are two other points, not so important nor having any particular significance in the story, but which I think are intended by the Poet to be other specimens of Hanuman's forgetfulness. I will just put them to you, to complete the picture. You may remember that when I described Bharata's character to you, I said that, like any ordinary person Rama was seized with some little misgiving at the last moment that his brother might have acquired a sort of excessive fondness for the pomp and circumstance of kingship and therefore he sent Hanuman in advance to find out how things stood. Hanuman was to come back when Rama had gone a little way on the journey to Ayodhya and to report exactly how the land lay. The fact is that Hanuman does not return at all to the place where he was told to come. He stayed with Bharata and came along with Bharata so that there was no time for any confidential talk. He was to watch Bharata and on narrating the story, observe carefully how he reacted whether he showed to it, any impatience, and how he was inclined to Rama. Why did Hanuman not return? The question has occurred to those who have dealt with the poem before. When he was expressly told that before Rama had gone far he should return from Bharata why did he not do so? He was not a servant who could disobey orders. My theory is that on seeing Bharata and narrating the story, his mind was full with other thoughts. He probably saw many things, and some thing about Bharata might have attracted him, thus dismissing that duty of his from the centre of his mind. This, however, is in accordance with what we have known to be Hanuman's weakness. I am afraid,

however, I must add that the great commentator whom we usually follow has on this occasion taken a line which I am unable to follow. He puts upon the text a meaning it cannot bear. When he says that Hanuman had no absolute order to return and make a report, that he had to observe Bharata and his attitude from two alternative standpoints and that he was to come and make a report only if one of the alternatives was true. This only shows his great anxiety to show that Hanuman was not guilty of any lapse. He puts this strange meaning on the words of Rama. Instead of Hanuman having to observe whether in Bharata a desire to be king himself had found a place, instead of that being the obvious meaning, Govindaraja says that Rama meant "When I go there and meet Bharata, it is my intention to offer the kingdom and ask him to be king. He may take it or not, I do not know whether, when I make a voluntary offer to Bharata, he will accept it gladly or whether he will refuse it. If he refuses the offer, do not come back. If, however, he intends to accept it, come and tell me." This is how he interprets the words. But it is unnatural and we have no alternative but to reject this interpretation. After all, Hanuman's defence is clear, that he simply forgot in the excitement of the moment when he met the brother, of whom he must have heard so much.

Another thing is perhaps more easy to explain. I notice it every time I read the poem. When he met Bharata, Hanuman gave him a plain narrative of all the things that happened after Rama, Sita and Lakshmana parted from Bharata. Bharata wanted to know everything in detail. The story is given as Hanuman told it. There is one very significant omission in the story which is difficult to understand; and the omission is the fire ordeal to which, after Ravana's destruction, poor Sita was subjected. I think it is very significant that a very important matter on which so much turns should be omitted. Why did Hanuman forget to mention that? Was it a case of mere forgetfulness? Perhaps he did not like to tell Bharata what must have started in Bharata's

mind a thought not favourable to his brother. In that case we must say that Hanuman was very tender to Bharata, that this shocking story need not reach his ears. Generally we all make that mistake. Nevertheless, the usual practice is for us, instead of making a clean breast of the affair, to go on as if nothing had taken place until it is discovered. We do not like to tell unpleasant things, until they become terribly unpleasant aud reveal themselves. If so, it is only just an ordinary weakness that prevents people from telling the whole of a story.

Now, about Hanuman I have dealt with what I consider to be cases of more or less intense forgetfulness. But there are some other things that I may mention. I have already referred to two of his conspicuous failures. Hanuman's ability and his diplomacy and his power of presenting a case were all acknowledged. Nevertheless, we had occasion to see that on two important matters he met with failure. One is when he tried to get Tara to countenance Angada's coronation. You remember my reading certain slokas in which he expressly bade her to sit up, console herself and look after Angada, made king. I went about finding out from other sargas how on the same occasion, the same event impressed Sugriva and others, how they all felt perhaps that a terrible blunder had been committed amounting almost to a crime, and that therefore something should be done to upset the consequences which might follow; and the most important of the consequences was certainly the question of succession to Vali. It occurs to him that Sugriva was genuine when he desired that he should not be king after his brother. I read to you also a sloka in which, after seeing these scenes of sorrow with his own eyes, Rama himself felt that there was something in the atmosphere of the consequence of a mistake. He cried with tears streaming from his eyes like the others, and for a moment was speechless. If that was the case, I argued that Hanuman might have felt that after Vali, not Sugriva but Angada should succeed, and he therefore mentioned the matter to Tara.

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at notwithstanding the overpowering grief of the lady, her head was tightly screwed on her shoulders. She does not seem to have lost her head at all. She says, "That will not do. In our case, after Vali Sugriva takes everything. (I suppose she meant the kingdom and herself too). He is the lord of the kingdom. Therefore he disposes of Angada, not I." What an extraordinarily able woman: I once called her the ancient Portia.

Another failure of his, also conspicuous, was when he tried to turn Angada away from his resolution of remaining behind when the month that had been given had expired, and Hanuman and everybody had failed and they had spent a little guilty time in Svayamprabha's cave enjoying the fruits and they came out, they had all incurred the death penalty prescribed by Sugriva. Then Tara, uncle of Angada, had suggested that they might all stay behind, once more Svayamprabha's cave and enjoy the luxuries there. Hanuman read in it something serious. He said to himself, "If Angada stays behind and a great many monkeys behind him, what is there to prevent him from becoming king of this part? Sugriva's kingdom will be partitioned, and it is just likely that Angada may become a source of danger to Sugriva." So he uses all his diplomatic skill and tells Angada that he had better go home. "I have known Sugriva all the time", he says, "He won't do you any harm." Then he adds very skillfully, "Do not trust these monkeys. They are after all monkeys. They won't remain faithful to you. Have they not got wives and children at home?" Of course Angada does not listen to him at all. He says, "On the other hand I know how my uncle is disposed towards me. He remembers that I am Vali's son. Besides, he never made me Yuvaraja. He could not help it." This then is another cause in which in spite of his great skill in diplomacy, Hanuman failed in argument, and against this chit of an Angada. This is all from Kishkindha kanda.

I now proceed to the next kanda. I am only mentioning instances where the reputed

skill of this great person failed. When he was talking to Sita, she, in her tender, pathetic style which draws tears from the reader, tells him everything she had to go through and occasionally expressed her misgivings whether she was right to live and cause anxiety to her great brothers, whether it would not be best for her to take her life and save trouble to so many. "How are my husband and his brother are to cross the sea?" she asks, "and how could the monkey army come over to my succour?" Hanuman could no longer bear it. He had ventured to say to her, "Why do you suffer so much? I am here, strong, mighty, powerful. As I came over, so I can go over. You are such a light creature, and if you get on my back, the next instant you will be with your husband. Dismiss all this trouble and anxiety and sorrow. It is very easy to me." Remember that at that moment he was only of the size of a cat. He had searched the whole of Lanka for her, and, unwilling to be detected by any person, he had reduced himself to that very small size. When he spoke to her offering to take her on his back, it seemed ridiculous to her. Being a nice lady, she gently laughed at him.

Then, having made that jocular remark, she could not help saying, "I am afraid you are what you appear to be."

Hanuman felt a little piqued. He felt that for the first time he was insulted grossly. He says to himself, "I must show her that I am not this pitiable little cat". And to induce trust in her, to produce the feeling that he was not professing to be strong and powerful while he was really not so, he began to swell and assume his real form. "What do you take me to be?" he says. "You think you cannot trust your slender body to me. I am strong enough to uproot the whole of this Lanka, take all the hills in it, and the men and women upon it, everybody including Ravana, and put them across the sea." That of course was a little exaggeration on his part. I must tell you that exactly as in modern days, when any person becomes a warrior and

eps on the field of battle, he does not know how exactly he could be within the limits of truth; not that warriors mean a word of it, not that the other party ascribes any meaning to any of it. In order to excite themselves to the fight, they have got to say some absurd things, to claim that they were all-powerful, that they had engines of mighty destruction, and they could bring the enemy down to grief. Hanuman had no enemies, but he had some critics. Therefore, he exaggerated a bit. Sita could not then say he was merely a monkey. She saw how powerful he was. Then she brought forward another argument, being very clever like most ladies. She says, "If you take me across, all these Rakshasas will follow you. While you are over the water, you will have to fight. It is a crazy thing. You may be beaten by these Rakshasas. All war is uncertain" (most extraordinary how a woman can make a generalisation about war generally). "Even if you can carry me and still elude the pursuers, it is not proper for me, knowingly and wilfully, i.e., with the exercise of my will, to touch any person other than my husband. It will not do for me. You may ask me, "Did not Ravana touch you?" Yes, he did, but I was not then mistress of myself. He laid violent hands on me. Now you ask me of my own accord to sit on your back. It is a very different thing. After all, is it worthy of my husband that, having lost me to Ravana in that way, he should allow me to be taken back to him by the back-door? He ought to come here, destroy Ravana and his family, and show to the world that nobody dare insult Rama's greatness or glory with impunity. It is then that my rescue should follow. You want to take me merely in the same way as Ravana brought me here. That alone will do him full honour if he should come here, destroy his enemy, especially Ravana, and then take me back home in triumph." Hanuman was then convinced that these things did not strike his intelligence at first. He said, "You have spoken as the wife of Rama

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Synthesis Not Conflict

S. L. N. Simha

What the world needs to-day, and at all times, not only for our good but for our very survival, is understanding and synthesis and not misunderstanding and conflict, which is the characteristic of the present generation in particular. Man is the most mistrusting creature. Man believes in exploitation of nature and 'conquest' of nature, rather than cooperation with nature. Of course, man tries to exploit fellow men.

We have political conflicts among nations and religions, caste and community conflicts. Christians, Muslims and Jews, for instance, are fighting for their destruction in Lebanon. Between Iraq and Iran, it would seem, it is Shia versus Sunni. In Ireland it was (perhaps still is) between Catholics and Protestants, the same being the story in a bloody conflict in Belgium some years ago. Cold, often hot, conflicts are witnessed all over the country on the basis of caste, community and language. All this is utterly harmful and opposed to all true religion and ethics.

What is required is not so much change of life style as one of attitudes. We must feel that howsoever we like our religion, language and culture, there is something inherently good in other religions, language and life-style. Of course, we may be steadfast in regard to the observance of our religions and cultural mandates, but we do not have to run down those systems and practices that differ from ours. Our attitude must be that at least so far as daily life is concerned, there is something, if not a lot, we can learn from others for our good.

We have often heard expressions like religious toleration and cultural synthesis. Toleration is a negative attitude; we need understanding and appreciation. I would go so far as to say that there is no other approach if one is truly religious and dharmic in nature. I have been compiling for sometime quotations from various religious books relating to Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity, Confucianism, Zorastrism, etc. As a layman, I have found a

number of common things, so far as daily life is concerned, and I think I am the better for this compilation, while my faith in my own system is unshaken.

I think the attitude I am referring is best illustrated by what I read many years ago about the Sage of Kanchi Kamakoti Peetam, if my memory is correct. When some foreigner came to Kanchi to pay his respects to the Swamiji, he was so much impressed he requested Swamiji to convert him to Hinduism. The Swamiji said, "undoubtedly there is a lot of good in your religion; why don't you try to lead the life of a good Christian ?"

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From Page No. 46

should speak. I admire you and approve of you. It is true that you have some misgivings that I am likely to be assailed by the enemies. Is there another woman in this world who, having been brought to this very extremity of danger, would say, 'I am not going with you, but would wait for the proper, delayed but honourable rescue?' You have spoken in such a way that Rama would be delighted and would be proud of you. Trust me, I will narrate every detail to him. I will recite to him every word, exactly as it came from you. It is not a desire that I should violate your feeling, that I should have the honour of having touched the body of a most illustrious person. I wanted to do Rama what would please him, my heart being tender with friendship for him. Lanka is separated from the mainland by a broad piece of water, and it is a very strongly defended fort, and I can assure you that it is a very difficult place to besiege. I know my strength, and that is why I made the offer. Do not think I had any other motive. If you do not like to be carried this way, give me some token, so that I may convince your husband that I have seen and conversed with you," This was another matter in which Hanuman failed, but was in the end glad to have failed for Sita convinced him that was the right course.

The Philosophy of Truth—15

V. Subrahmania Iyer

THEOLOGY AND SCHOLASTICISM

Those looking at the bright side praise religion, whereas those that see more of the dark side condemn it outright. But now when we could get glimpses of both sides, does it not behave us to make an unbiassed enquiry, though we be devotedly attached to our own religious beliefs? There is a South Indian proverb; "Even ambrosia when indulged in beyond measure acts as poison". Could not the same be said of religion? Even 'Good customs' are believed by Tennyson 'to corrupt th world'.

Whether there exists God; whether He is the Creator of the world; whether He is still creating; whether He is the Governor and the Judge that punishes the wicked and rewards the virtuous; whether there are heaven and hell; what they are like; what God's nature is; what attitudes of man please Him; what forms of worship are welcomed by Him; what connection there is between Him and the Bible, the Koran, the Vedas and other scriptures; whether they are eternal and superhuman; above all, how evil came into this world; whether God could be good when He has created a hell; these and others, such as, if God should be absolved from evil and Karma doctrine should be adopted, what are the proofs of its validity? - a thousand such questions form the subject-matter of theology. And the answers given vary with men's inclinations, tastes and culture.

Taking for granted that such dogmas as above of traditional beliefs and scriptures are true, men set out to interpret them finding arguments for and against with the help of science, logic and grammar. Since these dogmas have been viewed from a variety of standpoints, the literature that has grown up is enormous. The

majority of men usually mistake these discussions for philosophy, though in truth they form the subject of scholasticism.

The upshot of theology and scholasticism is that there is no unanimity of views on any point. Every topic has its pros and cons. Conflict and contradiction characterize them all, and are and will be endless as some Indian philosophers have pointed out, on perfectly rational grounds. Lest such natural differences should produce doubts in men's minds, zealous religionists have not hesitated to suppress them by declaring that the doubter is doomed to perdition.

Most men, either because they are too absorbed in earning their livelihood to think of such matters, or because they are too lazy to exercise their minds, or because they have only a slave mentality, meekly submit to the judgment of the theological or scholastic heroes in their midst. Even atheistic religions have their dogmas and scholastic literature. But with the march of human civilization, we find that the thoughtful set to enquire before they judge. Neither the dogmas of the theists, nor those of the atheists, can be accepted as truth without enquiry which is the province of science and philosophy. These conflicting aspects were noticed thousands of years ago.

LIFE

The touch-stone of philosophy is life. India has nourished herself on philosophic food for ages. It is pertinent to ask: To what extent has she succeeded in mitigating 'wants' and 'fears'? Have not Science, Religion and Art been more successful in this respect ?

As shown above, all life's activities comprehended under Science, Religion and Art tend towards the realization that the universe is an idea and that there ultimately is no difference in essence between idea and matter, thought and being, knowledge and existence or life. The past years that one has lived enjoying or suffering, achieving or failing, waking or sleeping and the past world of one's childhood and youth, all so real then, are now no more than

ideas or knowledge. Such is also the past history of man and his past world, so real when they lasted Everything resolves itself into knowledge or idea. The man of knowledge, feeling, thought or intellect, be he scientist, artist, theologian or whatever else, to the extent to which he rises above the gross world of the senses, is held superior to others. Everyone converts, whether he likes or not, according to his capacity all experience or life into idea or knowledge that he may value it. Knowledge therefore is that in which all life finds expression ultimately.

As one sees the entire universe of the dream state as mental, so does one actually see the world of the waking also to be mental, when one knows that dream and waking are non-different in their nature. Till this is reached knowledge appears different from existence. But the urge to know continues till the nature of 'idea' is ascertained when this is known i.e., When ultimate truth is attained, the non-duality of knowledge and existence becomes patent.

This is not mere theory. That such knowledge has been attained and such life has been actually lived is supported by the accounts we have of persons in all grades and walks of life : e.g., kings, like Ranti Deva and Janaka; slaves, like Jadabharata and Soudan, priests like Yagnavalkya and Vasishta, craftsmen and hunters like Tuladhara and Dharma Vyadha, laymen like Vidura and Akrura, women like Maitreyi and Gargi, and even youthful geniuses like Vamadeva and Prahlada. Perhaps it will be doubted whether these may not be mythical personages. But historical instances of those that realized the non-dual truth may also be cited. such as, Gaudapada, Sankara, Madhavacharya and Sri Ramakrishna. Many such philosophers, it is said, may be found now in various walks of life, though their philosophic character is not known to others. But one, acknowledged by many as possessing it, is Ramana Maharshi of the world of recluses.

Philosophy knows no distinctions of creed, caste, colour, race, calling, age or school. Its most distinguishing feature is that the philosopher seeks the

reme satisfaction of seeing himself in the all and the all in himself. No one can realise this fact by pursuing any other path, such as religion, art or for none; in as much as the philosopher who attains it is the all. Thus much from the view point of the perfect.

For, to the philosopher individually there is no perfection in as much as the universe as an idea is in him and of him. Till one realises this existence by eradicating ignorance one thinks life, world or God to be different from "knowledge" and one will not have realised "non-duality".

But for the man that has not attained perfection who has yet to realise himself as the all, the many distinctions exist; and for him, no one has attained the truth of non-difference. Absolute non-difference or non-duality has no meaning when the thinker excludes or differentiates himself from another or the rest. To the imperfect therefore, the so called perfect man is imperfect or at best is less imperfect than others. To him the world is still full of wants and sufferings and all have therefore only to strive to reach, helping others also to reach the goal. All this looks like mysticism to the man of intellect. But to the man of Reason, nothing is more real, more universal.

Perfection does not lie in any peculiarity of physique or in any abnormality of powers such as those of working miracles much less in doing anything out of the way. All such achievements or accomplishments are but ideas which disappear in deep sleep Nor do philosophers seek to distinguish themselves from the rest of mankind in any manner. The philosophers discharge, like their fellowmen, all duties, pleasant or unpleasant, and all functions in society, as well as they can. Whatever the circumstances they are placed in, prosperity or adversity, on the battlefield or in the parlour, in mountain caves or market places, when praised or condemned, they remain ever balanced in mind. The philosopher is only he who has realized within himself, the truth of non-difference, and who lives a life that is a

lesson to those who seek to realise themselves in the All and the All in themselves. When all ignorance is dispelled, when everything is found to be of the same stuff as that which is labelled knowledge (in the waking state), when there is no second or other, and when there remains nothing unattained, then there can be no room for 'want' or 'fear' of any change or even death.

Why do men not reach this goal easily? The failure is due to the inability to see that the external world including the body is only idea; that the body and the universe are not outside the mind and that what one calls soul or personality is equally idea. The inherited and almost ineffaceable prejudice or preconception that these are realities, in spite of the every day experience of deep-sleep is an erroneous knowledge which mankind is most reluctant to give up. Even death which is ever present in the world fails to remove it. Men with such preconceptions cannot hope to attain as Indian philosophers say, even scientific truth much less philosophic truth. The severest discipline, not only mental but also moral, the need of which the scientists also admit in a certain measure, is indispensable for this pursuit of truth.

The supreme test of Philosophy or as some would have it, the supreme verification of Ultimate Truth lies in life, i.e., life of the three-states, but not in the intellectual solution of even the most difficult problem, in any field of knowledge; nor in the weaving of conceptual webs of 'systems' of thought, which are and must be interminable. Philosophical enquiry based on Reason therefore goes beyond thought and word, i.e., intellect and concept. Reason, with a view to removing the intellectual misgiving that such a goal may be non-existent or unattainable, names it 'non-duality'. It is nothing but awareness together with the three-states, in which, like the water of the sea with or without the waves, the distinctionless aspect of non-duality can never be non-existent.

In India, Philosophy is sought for the sake of the one and

y lesson it teaches man:- How to attain and live the life in which is realized the all in one's self and one's self in the all. It is sought only by those that pursue the truth that admits of no doubts or possibility of doubts and that reveals the non difference of complete knowledge and perfect life. Such men are they that will not stop, come what may, till they reach "the end, which makes absolutely sure that there remains nothing unknown or unattained.

To what extent mankind attains this truth to that extent does it approach perfection and to that extent is it philosophical. When perfection is reached, there is none imperfect no imperfection anywhere. When perfect knowledge is attained, perfection of life in all its aspects is attained.

—oOo—

The heart is the altar. Consciousness is the deity. Being absorbed in it is the worship.

– Tirumular

Proficiency in learning should be displayed before an Assembly of the learned. It is a mistake to display scholarship before the unlearned.

– Tirukkural

A crystal will reflect within it the variety of colours of an object nearby; likewise, the face will clearly mirror the varied thoughts in the mind.

– Tirukkural

The Bhagavatham

M. Balakrishnan Nair

Among the eighteen Puranas, the Bhagavatham is the most important and the most popular. The key to this importance and popularity may be traced to the attractiveness of the underlying spiritual theme elaborated therein and the super-excellence of the central figure that plays the Divine role in a human garb. Now as to the central figure in the work, it is the attractive all-lovely form of Shri Krishna, the full incarnation of the Lord Supreme. Both divine and human aspects are blended in Shri Krishna. A human babe, as He is lying on the back, yet into a divine power to destroy the demon Sakata and others, a child with all the freaks of his playmates, yet with a divine power to present a view of the universe in His own mouth to his poor but blessed mother, a boy in his teens, yet with a miraculous power to attract the Gopees and assume similar forms to dance with every one of them at the same time, a warrior boy able to destroy the wicked Kamsa, a king and a king-maker, a diplomat and a politician, a spiritual guide and preceptor and everything else to suit the exigencies of time and place. Unlike Shri Rama who can be worshipped as an ideal man with advantage, Shri Krishna to be a sure guide to the follower has to be seen as a divine Being, and not as an ordinary mortal. Like Mahabharata, Shrimat-Bhagavatham is a treasure house of the various innumerable virtues and adventures of the Lord Shri Krishna, the supreme incarnate.

The original Shrimat Bhagavatham attributed to the divine seer Vyasa conta ns 12 can toes the first nine of which are devoted to several subsidiary topics, of which some are almost common to all the Puranas. The tenth canto is the one that describes the glorious adventures of Shri Krishna. The eleventh canto contains the cream of spiritual teaching, which is to Bhagavata what the Upanishads are to the Vedas and contains all Vedic truths. The last canto is mainly a description of the nature of the impending Kaliyuga, the efficacy of worship therein and other subsidiary topics.

Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi's Arunachala Siva

Dr. T. M. P. Mahadevan

varumpadi colilai vanden padi-
yala
varundidun ralaividhi yaruna-
cala

O Arunacala! Didst Thou not ask me to come? I have come. (Now) Thou hast to measure out (for my maintenance). If Thou shouldst suffer, it is Thy fate!

Saving the souls even by force, and without their conscious will, is what God's Grace does. The call of God is there, ever for the soul. In the case of the rare soul, there is ready response to this call. The devotee has come to God at His call. He cannot now disown her saying that she must suffer her lot. Has fate any power as against God's will? God has called the devotee-soul, and it should be his lot even if hard it is to bear her burden.

Sri Sankara says, in a verse of the Sivanandalahari addressing the Lord of souls, "If Thou art not in different (towards my lot), why is it that Thou dost not destroy the decree of Brahma (in regard to me) that makes me turn away from meditating on Thee, and that fills me with evil desires? If Thou art powerless how was that head of Brahma, which cannot be plucked with a thumb-nail and which is hard, plucked effortlessly by Thee with the merest tip of Thy thumb-nail?" (verse 15)

Good cannot throw the blame on fate and keep quiet. For, is He so powerless that He cannot set it right? What can really stand against the might of God? What can fate do as against the grace of God?

Sri Krishna has made this promise in the Bhagavadgita: "Those people who worship Me truly, thinking Me to be non-different (i.e. as the non-dual Self)-for them that are (thus) ever united in thought with Me, I bear the responsibility of securing what they want and protecting what they have" (verse ix, 22).

The following story is illustrative of the truth as taught in this verse: Once upon a time

there were two brothers : the elder was given to the practice of penances; the younger was an earner of bread. The younger would bring home everyday provisions, etc..., and give them to his wife. That lady would share the provisions with the wife of the elder brother. The latter would do the cooking, etc , and keep the food ready by noon, when her husband would come back from the river-side where he was performing his penances. His wife would serve him with food. He would offer the food to God, and then partake of it. Immediately he would return to the river-bank to resume his penances. This went on every day, for a long time. At long last, the wife of the younger brother was put out at what she considered to be the vegetative and wasteful life of her brother-in-law. She stopped supplying provisions, etc..., to her sister-in-law. When the austere brother came home that noon, there was no food. Without eating he repaired to the river-side for his meditations. The same thing happened the next day. But before going back for his devotions, he took out the text of the *Bhagavad-gita* opened the page which contained the verse which says that God attends to the welfare of those people who constantly think of Him as non-different. He thought that these were not the Lord's words and that the verse shoud have been interpolated. So, he scored it out, and went back to the river-bank. When he had gone, the Lord Hari went to his home with cartloads of provisions and wealth, delivered them to the lady, and disappeared. The lady hurried to the bank of the river, met her husband, and related to him what had happened. The pious man went home, beheld the wondrous doings of the Lord, took out the text of the *Bhagavad-gita* again, and wrote with his own hand the expunged verse.

The lesson of the story is that the sincere aspirant has nothing to be worried about, not even about his subsistence in the body. Dread, anxiety, etc..., can have no lodgement in him. His is the truly carefree life His only concern is with his spiritual progress. He should look upon the world, including his body, as the superimposed appearance on the non-dual Self.

Eloquent Silence

N. Hariharan

Silence, like appearances, can be deceptive. S lence can mean either perfect ignorance or plenary wisdom. An ignoramus sulking in swarthy silence and a sage revelling in profound Silence are poles apart. The muteness of the ignorant mirrors the dearth and discomfiture, utter helpnessness and aridity of thick Ignorance. The stillness of the Sage, on the contrary, reflects the poise and profundity, the fullness and fecundity of Transcendental Wisdom. The silence of the ignorant resembles the immobility of barren clouds which are incapable of producing lifegiving rains. And, if at all rain comes, it comes in paltry trickle, thoroughly unsatisfying. The utterances of the ignorant are mere lispings of swamping ignorance. The deep silence of the sage is like the brimful quiet of rain-bearing clouds which can release torrents of good rains. The sage, if he chooses, can deluge the world with the flood of his sublime eloquence. Tortoise-like, he can both withdraw himself into the shell of solemn silence and can come out of it, if necessary. The quietude of the sage is rich, ecstatic, lofty and all-knowing. The muteness of the ignorant is a measure of his intellectual bankruptcy and spiritual torpor.

Lord Dakshinamurti is an apt symbol of the richness of spiritual Silence. The Lord's Silence is so dynamic and pregnant that it transmits spiritual wisdom unobtrusively to His four decrepit disciples known as Sanakas. The Lord tellingly proves that the illumined sage can practise articulate silence (or silent articulation?) and impart esoteric truths to spiritually receptive minds. The Lord, by His dramatic example, also proves that the stolid iceberg of spiritual silence can, if occasions warrant, melt and flow into swift currents of spiritual eloquence sweeping away the weeds of unspiritu-

ality. The silent Lord, out of His unbounded grace, incarnated on earth as Adi Sankara, the epitome of spiritual eloquence. Austere Silence relented and translated itself into an astoundingly divine eloquence. The subtle unexpressed esoteric verities embedded in the Lord's mighty Silence found their most eloquent expression in Adi Sankara's immortal words.

If Silence, when occasions warrant, issues out in ringing words of saving wisdom, stunning eloquence stills itself with incredible ease and subsides into mystic Silence. In fact, Olympian Silence of the sage is the acme of spiritual eloquence, the grand climax and culmination of intimate spiritual experiences. The mightiest eloquence fumbles and falters and fails of its purpose in the face of esoteric spiritual themes which transcend speech and speculation. The Srutis famous phrase "yatho vaco nivartante aprapya manasa saha" tellingly demonstrates the incapacity of mind and speech to probe into the realm of Spirit. On matters supramundane, the best and only method of true exposition is that of Silence—Silence that is profound, plumbless and placid. The Sruti tells us of a profound Seer who maintains deep silence in response to repeated posers by his disciples on the subtle theme of Brahman. When the impatient disciples ask why he is not teaching them Brahman, the Sage significantly replies, "I am teaching you Brahman (through Silence) You are not grasping it." Brahman is unspeakable and unthinkable. Brahman is best expounded through Silence, perfect, pregnant and profound. The marathon Silence of the sage is an eloquent Silence which teaches Brahman unfailingly, though unobtrusively.

—O—

Fear of the enemy is one of the factors that goad beings evolve into higher and yet higher orders.

– Vedanta

Srividya

R. Kasinathan

Manthram is that for which Mind (manas) is the base-board. Manthram has three forms (i) Sthoola, (ii) Sookshma, and (iii) Karana. Sookshma form is the Nada (or Sabda) aspect of the Manthram. Sthoola form is the physical rendering of the Manthram, in the alphabets. Karana form is the Artha (meaning) of the Manthram, or the particular Devatha it invokes.

In the cosmic world, the Holy Trinity of Brahma, Vishnu and Rudra carry out Srishti, Sthithi and Samharam, in union with their respective Devies. In the Pindandam, or Man, Buddhi (intellect), Manas (Mind) and Ahamkaram (I'ness) do the three Sookshma Srishti,-Samrakshana, and Samharam. To make it more clear, the Spanda or Spurana Sakthi of the Jivatma urges the intellect to throw out thought waves, which are nourished and kept up by the mind with the help of past experience, i. e., Memory and mental analysis. They take a well-defined form at this stage. The individual by asserting his 'Egoism' (Ahamkaratwam) puts to action these well defined thoughts in the outside world either as vocal expression or bodily action.

This is the elucidation for the passage-'Crores of Brahma, Vishnu, and Siva prostrate at the feet of Goddess Bhuvaneswari' in Devi Bhagavatham.

When the fourth action or Kriya, viz. Layam comes in, the above three kriyas are put an end to and Buddhi, Manas and Ahamkaram also perish. Now the Jeevatma Sakthi units with the Paramatma Sakthi giving no place for matter. This union is called 'LAYA - YOGA' and manthropasana is the instrument for achieving this 'LAYA - YOGA' in Sakthi cult (Mother worship). Mother worship is justified on the following points.

1) It has got the sanction of Vedas in 'Mathrudevobhava'.
2) Sthoola, Sookshma and Karana bodies of the new born come out from Mother's womb.
3) Mother's affection and love has no other substitute in the world.

4) Mother's grace to the child is unlimited and without motive.

5) The intelligent as well as the dullest child derives the same Mathrubhavam from the mother

6) Namas 155 and 233 of Sri Lalitha Sahasranamam namely 'NIRISWARAYAI-NAMAHA' (Masterless), and MAHAKAMESAMAH-ISHYAINAMAHA (Consort to Mahakamesa), though look apparently contradictory are explained in the nama BHASHAROOPAYAI NAMAHA where mother is the Nada aspect and Siva is the Artha aspect. In conslusion it is established that Mother (Energy) is complementary to Siva (or Matter).

Srividya or Sakthi cult has codified the Mother worship, taking sanction from Vedas and Agamas. Devi Pooja consists of Dhyanam, Avahanam, Parayanam (or Prayer), Japam, Meditation, Homa, Tharpana and Santharpana etc.

Modern Science has proved that matter is finally reducible to 'Energy packets' and transmission of such energy is in wave pattern, which goes by the name of 'Wave Mechanics' Within the perceptable range, these waves are called the light waves, sound waves, etc. and beyond, by the name Supersonic Waves, Micro Waves, etc. Our old Maharshies have given a common name to all such waves as Nadam, and the sum total of the cosmic energy as NADA-BRAHMAM.

Srividya has accepted 51 Mathurukakasharas as the Sthoola form of Nada Brahmam, which precludes the Sookshma form to be Nadam created by uttering these alphabets, and the Karana form as none other than the Mother, vide Nama 577 - MATHURUKA VARNA ROOPINYAI NAMAHA. Incidentally this type of Upasana where the Yantra Roopam (Srichakram) and Mathrukasksharas are worshipped with 'E k a b h a v a m', is called 'KAILASA PRASTHARAM'.

Those who have witnessed Kali Pooja in Calcutta would have seen the Kali being decorated with a Munda Mala (a garland of heads). Kali is Sakthi presiding over time (Kalam). This Mundamala is Vimarsha aspect of Kali and the Mala

See Page—62

The way of life

N. Vijayalakshmi

The way of life has a will of its own
And it runs on its own track
Sometimes fast and sometimes slow
It never will try to turn back.

It does not follow the way of its sider
Like a horse who is held by reins
But passes thro' all the roads
Of deserts, forests and plains.

Life is a path stretched along
Like a clear, cloudless night sky
And the stars are like tender flowers
Which form the pleasures coming once a while.

Luck is like a bright torch
That can illuminate the path of life
And when luck favours this path.
Life will go on like the notes of a fife.

Life is to experience all pleasures and pains
To take part in a play that's not being staged
To give a form to the wonderful world
And to learn to live whether or not being caged.

From Page—61

(Garland) is called Aksharamala (Garland of letters) These heads symbolically represent all the 51 letters of Sanskrit Alphadet. The facial expression of each head should simulate the uttering of the particular alphabet.

In Devimanam, Time, Thathwam, Space and Vidya are represented in terms of these 51 letters of the alphabets only, thereby depicting the entire Cosmos as Mathrukakshara Swarupam. An Upasaka by constantly reciting these Mathrukakshras according to the Srividyakarma, feels, expresses, and treats the things in the world as an aspect of Mother, and finally becomes one with her.

A Unique call to the Moon : Poetic Excellence

N. S. Padmanabhan

The Moon has always been a catalyst of poetic imagination and it is no wonder that Indian poets in general and poets of Tamil Nadu in particular who have a passion for mythological anecdotes being harnessed for inculcating 'Bakthi' towards the Gods and God desses of Hindu Religion. Of the ninetysix 'prabanthams' of modern Tamil verse, Pillaithamizh' (Verses on Children-deities) occupies a unique place of recognition and merit.

A child's crying for the Moon in its literal sense is taken as the theme. The child's mother with her babe on her hip and a vessel with morsels of food in her hand, both of them extening their looks to the rising Moon's disc on the Eastern horizon on a full moon day is not only a common sight with a charm its own but a stimulating factor for a poet to fall into rhapsodial outbursts.

Coming to the scene proper, the child, with its moonlit bright face calls out the beaming Moon as his playmate. The Mother, in her ardent desire to cajole her son with his chosen desire 'inter alia' feeding him with small morsels of food taken from the cup on hand at decent intervals, also sends out her clarion call. The poet's vision begins to expand and unfold a dramatic sceneario full of promises and expectations.

Says the poet unto the Moon : "O, the dispenser of cool, celestial light! Your bright presence is capable of driving away even the ghosts from out of their hidings; yet, you suffer an ignominy when the Serpent-Dragon of Rahu comes and devours you in toto or in parts; that makes the people of the world to consider you as dead and they take bath in rivers and ponds and make oblations propitiative of those dead and gone. What a ridicule!"

"If you are wise enough, you can avoid this unpleasant-ness, very easily Our lord, Murugha, who is a child in arms now, soliciting your comradeship, has the peacock as his 'vahana'. You can safely entrust your defence against this assault to that peacock (which is a nightmare for serpents) and be at peace."

Misplaced trust is dangerous to life

B. S. Narasimha Iyengar

Once upon time a king had got a fine palace made for himself. In his bedroom was an excellent and soft bed on which he lay comfortably. But in the midst of the white bed-sheet a white louse (a small insect) lay hidden. At night, the king snored but could not know how this louse was slowly sucking his blood, night after night.

One day a bug sneaked into the bed of the king. The louse said to the bug 'O Agnimukha why have you come to this place which is unfit for you? Before anybody can find you out, save yourself and get away!' But the bug said 'O my friend, why do you turn me out like this? I have come as your guest, I have not so far tasted such sweet blood as that of this king. Please give me an opportunity to do so! Do not be selfish!'.

The louse replied 'I drink the blood of this king without disturbing his sleep. If you can also do it you may well stay here.' The bug agreed and stayed. Unaware of all this the king came in and slept soundly on his bed. But the bug, unable to control his desire to suck the blood, of the king even before the louse could give him a warning. The king was awakened by the sharp bite. When the servants took out the bedspread and searched, they found only the louse. The bug had quickly gone under the cot and shielded itself. The louse was caught and killed. It paid the penalty for sheltering a cunning fellow creature.

Moral: Before a man is trusted and offered shelter, you should study his nature to avoid danger to yourself.

—oOo—

Dear Patrons,

The time has come to take leave of all of you so far as KAMAKOTI VANI is concerned. I thank you sincerely for your unstinted support and co-operation.

2. As already indicated, I propose to concentrate on creating a VEDIC COMPLEX. Initially, there will be quite a lot of gestational and teething problems, but once the COMPLEX gets organized, financial control and supervision may not pose any difficulty; the academic side will be left in the hands of professionally competent people. This factor distinguishes the new venture from running a journal, which requires continuous watch.

3. In tune with the credibility standard established by the TRUST (KPT), I have started a VEDA PATASALA of my own in the name of MANNARGUDI LAKSHMI AMMAL PATASALA (MLP) in a village called ALLUR, near Trichy. Though a TRUST (MLPT) has been formed to meet long-term needs, the expenditure of the PATASALA in the early stages, i.e., upto 31/3/86, will be met completely by me. During this period I propose to familiarise myself with the problems of patasala administration. Later KPT & MLPT will work in close collaboration. (The 'object clause' of MLPT is wider to lend support to KPT in a variety of ways.) In accordance with past practice, overhead expenses will not be debited to the two TRUSTS. Patrons will get audited accounts promptly.

4. Finally the TRUSTS will always have the protective umbrella of their Holinesses of Kanchi.

With warm greetings,

Yours Sincerely,

S. VENKATARAMAN
Managing Trustee
KPT & MLPT.

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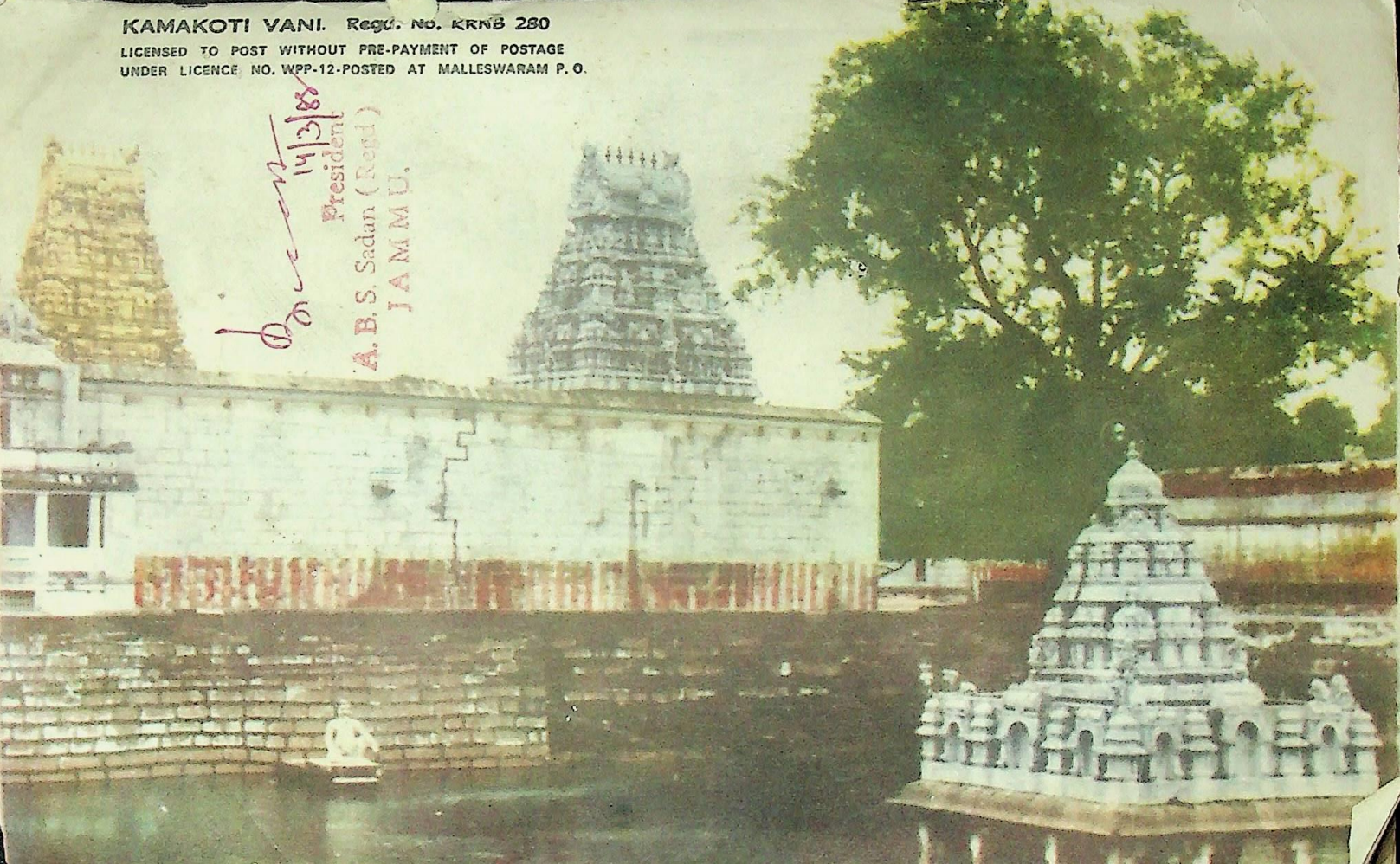
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